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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [KPAO](#) [SOCI](#) [PINR](#) [RP](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: CARDINAL SIN DIES AT AGE 76

REF: A. MANILA 2731

[B](#). 04 MANILA 0614

[C](#). 03 MANILA 5177

[1](#)1. (U) Retired Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin died of multiple organ failure at a hospital in greater Manila at 6:15 AM on June 21. Cardinal Sin, 76, had been in poor health for the past several years and had been in intensive care for the past two days due to an infection related to a long-standing kidney problem. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued a statement on his death, which commented, in part: "History will mark this day of sadness when a great liberator of the Filipino people and a champion of God passed away. Cardinal Sin leaves a legacy of freedom and justice forged in deep personal courage."

[1](#)2. (U) Sin's family plans to transfer his remains from a memorial chapel in Quezon City to the Manila Cathedral where he will lie in state. The Catholic Church has not yet announced details for Sin's funeral. The funeral may offer an occasion for protests or demonstrations given ongoing political tensions in the Philippines (Ref A). As of yet, however, no groups have announced that they plan to use Cardinal Sin's death as a rallying point, but Mission will continue to monitor the situation.

[1](#)3. (U) Jaime Sin was born August 31, 1928, in Aklan Province, Panay Island, in the Visayas region of the Central Philippines. He was the 14th of 16 children of a Chinese merchant and a Filipino woman. He was ordained a priest in [1](#)1954. He became the Bishop of Jaro (Ilo Ilo Province, Panay Island) in 1967, Archbishop of Jaro in 1972, Archbishop of Manila in 1974, and a Cardinal in 1976. His appointment as the Archbishop of Manila came at a time when the country was four years into martial law and there was simmering discontent against the Marcos dictatorship. Working closely with Corazon Aquino, who would shortly become president, Cardinal Sin played a major role in rallying large crowds during the "People Power" (EDSA I) movement in 1986 that ousted President Marcos. He was also active in the EDSA II movement that ousted President Estrada in 2001. Cardinal Sin was widely acknowledged as a key player in the political and religious arena until his retirement in 2003 at the age of 75. He was a close ally of Pope John Paul II on doctrinal matters, but was too ill to attend the funeral of the Pope in April. Since the retirement of Cardinal Sin, other leaders have come to the fore in the Catholic Church (to which 83 percent of Filipinos belong), including: Archbishop of Cebu Ricardo Cardinal Vidal; Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales; and Davao Archbishop and Head of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) Fernando Capalla.

[1](#)4. (U) On June 21, Mission issued the following press statement, which was also posted on its website:

"The U.S. Embassy was saddened to learn of the death of His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin on June 21. We recognize his many contributions to the political, spiritual and moral life of this nation, and we extend our condolences to his family and to the Catholic faithful."